

## Mr. Randall as Philosopher

Is there a "new" philosophy?

The title of John Herman Randall's book, *The Spirit of the New Philosophy*, reminds us of that other eternal cliché, "This is an age of transition." We have always been as curious to see an age that was not an age of transition as we are to see a review by H. L. Mencken without the word "pish-posh" in it. Both, we hold, are self-evidently inconceivable.

Mr. Randall proves something in his book, but a philosopher who does not prove something is a thinker—and thinkers are as rare as philosophers are commonplace. We have fought since the birth of our first mustache for the distinction between thinkers and philosophers, between thought and philosophy. Everybody—unto Bryan—has a philosophy. It is one of the conditions of existence. But few beings are thinkers. Philosophical systems are seldom destructive; original thinking almost always is. Dr. Crane is a philosopher. James Branch Cabell and Mayhew Ellis are thinkers. One takes an age worn idea and puts another story—sometimes a fancy couple—on it; the other takes an age worn idea, a "self-evident truth," and dissects, dissociates the ideas, emotions and desires that built it and troubles the whole thing into the dust.

He is often guilty of paradox, irony, and may even be crucified, burned at the stake or left to wait around in his coffin for fame and flowers.

We should class all the great egotists as thinkers; all sentimentalists as philosophers. A philosopher never gets to the origin of things, but only to the meaning of them, and the "meaning" is generally a reflection of his own needs. Curiosity is the motive that directs the thinker. Comfort is the motive that dominates a "philosopher." When a "philosopher" is rated a pessimist and his cracks have no commercial value it is because he is primarily a thinker. It's the difference between Bergson and Schopenhauer, between Wells and Chesterton.

So when you pick up a book about the "new philosophy" you can bet the man who wrote it is going to rub you the right way. He has formulated a new Utopia. He has got his paw on "Eureka!" He has squatter rights in Kingdom Come. He is putting a new Moody and Sankey hymn in the mouth of the famous old quartet, the Good, the True, the Beautiful and Love. He will Veblenize. There will be a pretty balloon for the sick children of earth at the end of every chapter. He is a master builder of journalistic commonplaces. He takes it for granted that man does not love war, pain, trouble and vengeance, which is exactly contrary to all observed facts. He will half-sole and heel the leaky shoes of the idealists of 1913 while they wait—or sit in a Morris chair with an ivory paper cutter.

Mr. Randall's book is dedicated "to all who labor anywhere in the building of the new world." Which means all the unskilled labor in the Universal Uplift Union. Unity is to be the cornerstone of Mr. Randall's new edifice. Unity of man with nature, unity of man with God, the unification of society, of religions (and of pocketbooks?—he is vague about

this most important branch of his doctrine). It is to be a sort of spiritual Prussianization of the soul. A Barleson of unification is somewhere abroad in the dark and backward abysses of our unconscious nature. Men are longing to know one another better ("the better to eat you, my child"?).

It seems we haven't given sufficient attention to love. It would be satanic to say that love is the highest form of evolved egoism and selfishness, so don't let's say it. We could say also that a "better understanding of one people by another" is always the prelude to a more subtle form of exploitation by the party who understands most and best, but we won't say that either. Such cheap cynicism is out of place in a world gone clean to chaos, as Mr. Randall avers.

But, although it is dark now, Mr. Randall devotes his foreword to expounding the heretical doctrine that dawn always follows the night. Personally, we have no way of disproving this, as we never get out of bed until 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

There are twelve chapters in Mr. Randall's book. The first two chapters are an exposition of the age of revolt in which we live and the causes of the revolt. He puts his O. K. on the spirit of revolt, but wants it put an end to as quickly as possible. We can see he is uneasy about this revolt business—it breeds art, literature, character, wild, flaming, lawless spirits, variety, "chaos," comets and hate—spoils, as it were, Mr. Randall's meditations on the Good, the True and the Beautiful.

What he calls "chaos" we should call endless variety. Nature tends to endless variation; "unity" is a metaphysical phantom, beloved of fatigued and etiolated spirits. The times are not a bit out of joint, but the idealists and unitarians are. Their eyes and their brains cannot stand the infinite variety of life to-day—life just rambling nowhere, blazing, furious, multifarious, evanescent life, with its paradoxes, dramas, songs of death and light—just old Life, that doesn't care a shin-plaster whether it is going or whence it came.

If Mr. Randall were an aesthetic ascetic instead of a moralist he'd keep his hair-shirt on and find his "escape" in the joy of watching what's going to happen next.

The rest of the chapters in the book are founded on the dogma that there is a demand everywhere for unity—that is the "spirit of the new philosophy." This Unity is the coming Fourth Dimension on earth. The individual withers and the phantoms are more and more. In justice to the author it should be said that he avers this Unity will not soak up and dissolve the individual; but, like all economic and religious nirvanists, he offers us no guarantees. The final chapter, *The Pathway of Realization*, tells us that Love is the universal solvent.

No, Mr. Randall, this is too much like going to Heaven. We prefer being shot at sunrise to living in a world of sentimental Eighteenth Amendments. I fight and hate—therefore I am.

THE SPIRIT OF THE NEW PHILOSOPHY. BY JOHN HERMAN RANDALL. Brentano's.

### Colored Light on Serbia

Of a dilute flavor are these *Tales of Serbian Life*, by Ellen Clivers Davies, the dilution being done with much cataloguing of the national customs and encyclopedic information on how the people live. It is intended for the young and an air of sprightliness designed to be especially attractive to them is produced by the exclamatory method—the use of a great deal of "How nice!" and "What fun!" Then the most Serb names, like Mladenovata and Milutin Radovitch contribute their might to the local color. But it is a matter for record that the most entertaining bit in the book is referred in a foot note to *Hero Tales and Legends of the Serbians*, by W. M. Petrovitch.

Three illustrators have contributed drawings in color.

TALES OF SERBIAN LIFE. BY ELLEN CLIVERS DAVIES. Doubt, Macf. & Co.

## A Book of the Fogg Museum

THE catalogue of the Fogg Art Museum, a splendid volume of 350 pages, has recently been published by the Harvard University Press. It is in reality a satisfactory book of reference for medieval and Renaissance paintings in this country, for it not only describes and reproduces the pictures in the Fogg Museum and gives the facts and gossip of their origin and ownership, but it has lists of certain of the pictures in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and Mrs. Gardner's collection, and the names of American owners of other examples of the artist under discussion.

This enables the student or the connoisseur to get information concerning the number and whereabouts of examples of the artist's work in this country and the estimate that has been put upon such work by experts. This, in conjunction with explanatory notes on processes of painting, preparation and painting of panels and of the altar pieces, makes it a useful and acceptable handbook for any one who wishes to build a foundation for the study of medieval art or to get an orientation that will enable him to visit picture galleries or collections intelligently and profitably.

A brief chapter on Byzantine painting is contributed by the director, Mr. Forbes. From a literary point of view it leaves much to be desired. The general introduction to Florentine painting is by Arthur Pope. In substance and in presentation it is excellent and shows that the writer has not only a familiarity with the Florentine masters of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but that he has the capacity to state briefly the facts about their most noteworthy productions.

The illustrations, from pictures in the Fogg Museum of the Florentine School, do not include many examples of the popular masters. However, one who studies this chapter attentively with the excellent descriptions of the exemplars reproduced will have a splendid foundation for the study, not only of these, but of other originals.

The introduction to the Sienese paintings is by Mr. G. H. Edgell, who has also done the introduction to Umbrian painting. Neither merits special comment. The introductions to the chapters on Spanish, German and Flemish painting are by Miss Margaret Gilman, the secretary of the Fogg Museum. They are excellent, plain of statement, sequential of narrative, with proper relativity of subjects, and sufficient contrast of the work of different artists to sustain the reader's interest, and without particular attempt at criticism.

It is especially as a piece of book making that this volume is noteworthy. The size and shape of the page, the margins, the type, the paper are remarkable. Whoever is responsible for those qualities which go to make up what may be called the readability of the page is to be congratulated.

Not only the printing, spacing, margin and rhythm of the page are excellent; the illustrations, though not on calendered paper, under a magnifying glass reveal a fidelity to the original that is astonishing. For instance, the reproduction of Seipione Pulzone's "A Portrait of a Cardinal," which is only one of many equally good, will bear the most careful scrutiny beneath the glass, and exhibits the marvellous qualities of the original, aside from the color effects.

Indeed, it would be very difficult to find fault with this volume as a piece of book making save, perhaps, in one respect. The paper is too white. The faintest cream color would have been more sympathetic to the wonderfully clear and dignified font of type from which the print is made.

Harvard University has reason to congratulate itself on the successful way in which the University Press has been able to get the contents of the collection before the American public. This catalogue will be a welcome signpost to many who were not quite sure that the route to their goal led through the Fogg Museum. Examination and study of it by others is bound to awaken the desire for a deeper understanding of and closer familiarity with the wondrous art of the Renaissance.

JOSEPH GRANS.

FOGG ART MUSEUM, HARVARD UNIVERSITY, COLLECTION OF MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE PAINTINGS. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

### A Biography of Debs

DAVID KARSNER has written a sketch of the life of Eugene Debs, outlining his early struggles, his career as labor leader and his activities in State and national politics. Mr. Karsner has incorporated in the work letters received from Debs's friends and supporters and a number written by Debs himself from the jail at Woodstock, Ill., and the prison at Morrisville, W. Va., as well as several of Debs's speeches and the proceedings of the trial at which he was convicted under the Espionage Act and sentenced to a term of ten years in the Federal prison at Atlanta.

Readers of *Debs* cannot but see that its author's subject is his hero, regarded as a man of strong convictions and of a personality that would win him leadership among those who held similar social and political views, and friends even among those who held views in opposition. As Debs has given his own authorization and indorsement of the work, it is to be taken for granted that any one who wishes to read Debs's speeches, his life story and his defence at the trial which resulted in his conviction will find them, from the Debs standpoint, accurately reported in this book.

DEBS. By David Karsner. Doubt & Live-right.

## Theodore Roosevelt's Letters to His Children

Edited by Joseph Bucklin Bishop

RICHMOND NEWS-LEADER:

"No biographer can possibly show as much of the real character of the man Roosevelt."

LOS ANGELES TIMES:

"Will form the keystone to the arch of Roosevelt's literary fame."

OUTLOOK:

"The reader will lay down this book with a knowledge that he has been privileged to have had in his hands a great biographical document. We do not think its like can be found in the whole range of literature."

ATLANTIC MONTHLY:

"It has lessons of great concern to American children and lessons of love, cheer, courage and good sense, of even more concern to all fathers and mothers."

Illustrated with "picture letters." \$2.50

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS  
FIFTH AVE. AT 48<sup>th</sup> ST. NEW YORK

By J. H. RANDALL

### Spirit of the New Philosophy

Summarizes the tendencies and conditions in the immediate future of human thought. Straightforward, practical conclusions by a man of affairs. \$1.75.

Publishers BRENTANO'S 345 Ave. New York

### BOOKS BOUGHT

ESPECIALLY SETS  
• HIGHEST PRICES •

HIMEBAUGH & BROWNE  
• 471 FIFTH AVE. OFF. LUNNY-NEW YORK •